

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 INR-07

NSAE-00 FAA-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 PA-01

PRS-01 IO-10 /076 W

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O R 291651Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4267

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 13444

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, OCLR, UK, SF

SUBJECT: ASCENSION ISLAND AND SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSIT

REF: (A) STATE 204449; (B) SEITZ-ETON TELCON AUGUST 28

1. EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON MARTIN REID, HEAD, FCO CENTRAL AND SOUTH AFRICA DEPARTMENT, AND ANTHONY FORD, SOUTH AFRICA DESK, AUGUST 29. PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO DISCUSS IN GENERAL CLEARANCE PROCEDURES ON SOUTH AFRICAN REQUESTS TO TRANSIT ASCENSION ISLAND. SPECIFICALLY, GROUP ADDRESSED SAG AIR FORCE CLEARANCE REQUEST FOR C-130B SEPTEMBER 2/12 AND SAFAIR REQUEST FOR SERIES CLEARANCE SEPTEMBER-JANUARY.

2. PROCEDURES: EMBASSY OFFICER DESCRIBED US VIEW THAT ANY THIRD-PARTY REQUEST FOR TRANSIT THROUGH ASCENSION REQUIRED JOINT US-UK APPROVAL BASED ON ARTICLE IV (2) AND ARTICLE XI OF 1956 AGREEMENT. ALTHOUGH NO SUBSEQUENT US-UK ACCORD HAS SPELLED OUT PROCEDURES ENVISAGED BY ARTICLE XI, WE CONSIDER THE ARTICLE ITSELF TO HAVE THAT EFFECT. THE PRINCIPLE OF JOINT US-UK PERMISSION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED OVER THE YEARS AND GOVERNS ANY THIRD-PARTY

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CLEARANCE REQUEST, MILITARY OR COMMERCIAL.

3. REID REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL TO HAVE US INTERPRETATION IN WRITING, PERHAPS AS AN AIDE-MEMOIRE. HE DOUBTED WHETHER FCO WOULD DISAGREE WITH US POSITION, BUT BELIEVED IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR BOTH PARTIES TO BE ABLE TO REFER TO THE SAME LANGUAGE. EMBASSY OFFICER AGREED AND SAID HE WOULD ASK DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE PHRASEOLOGY TO BE INCLUDED IN AN AIDE-MEMOIRE. REID FURTHER SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE WISE TO WORK OUT AN AGREED FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD REVIEW THIRDPARTY CLEARANCE REQUESTS. PERHAPS ALL SUCH APPLICATIONS SHOULD FIRST BE REFERRED TO LONDON/WASHINGTON FOR POLITICAL CONSIDERATION BEFORE REFERRING THE REQUESTS TO ASCENSION FOR TECHNICAL APPROVAL. REID REGRETS THE PROCEDURES MIGHT PROVE CUMBERSOME, BUT GUESSED THAT SOME SUCH ARRANGEMENT WOULD PREVENT A REPETITION OF THE UK'S UNILATERAL CLEARANCE OF SAFAIR FLIGHTS EARLIER THIS YEAR. REID SAID SOUTH AFRICA MAKES ABOUT A DOZEN OR SO CLEARANCE REQUESTS PER YEAR, USUALLY BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO THE FCO. EMBASSY OFFICER AGREED IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO IMPOSE SOME ORDER ON THE CLEARANCE CONFUSION OF THE LAST THREE WEEKS.

4. SAG C-130 B REQUEST: EMBASSY OFFICER DESCRIBED THREE OPTIONS (REF B) WE SEE FOR HANDLING SAG REQUEST TO CLEAR C-130 B THROUGH ASCENSION SEPTEMBER 2 AND 12: A) GRANT BOTH CLEARANCES NOW ON BASIS OF SAG INFORMATION THAT NORTHBOUND FLIGHT CARRYING INNOCUOUS CARGO, B) GRANT BOTH CLEARANCES NOW WITH EXPLICIT PROVISION THAT EMBARGO ITEMS SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN SOUTHBOUND CARGO, AND C) GRANT NORTHBOUND CLEARANCE NOW BUT REQUEST DESCRIPTION OF SOUTHBOUND CARGO BEFORE GRANTING SECOND CLEARANCE. DEPARTMENT

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FAVORS THIRD OPTION, EMBASSY OFFICER EXPLAINED, WHICH MAY BE THE TOUGHEST OF THE THREE, BUT HARDLY UNREASONABLE. REID CONCURRED, SAYING HE WAS SOMEWHAT PUT OUT WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS' CAT-AND-MOUSE GAME. HIS DEPARTMENT WILL PUT THIRD OPTION TO UNDER SECRETARY CAMPBELL TODAY, WITH THE SECOND POSSIBILITY AS A FALL-BACK. FCO WILL INFORM EMBASSY OF DECISION.

5. SAFAIR FLIGHTS: SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY HERE HAS NOT YET REPLIED TO FCO NOTE REQUESTING A DESCRIPTION OF CARGO TO BE CARRIED BY SAFAIR PLANES THROUGH ASCENSION SEPTEMBER-JANUARY. NOR DOES THE FCO PLAN TO PURSUE THE MATTER. EMBASSY OFFICER SPECULATED SAG MAY SIMPLY DROP THE REQUEST, BUT SAID US WOULD SUPPORT UK DISAPPROVAL IF CARGO PROVED TO BE ITEMS WHICH WOULD CIRCUMVENT UN EMBARGO. OFFICER NOTED THAT IF SAFAIR CARGO TURNED OUT TO BE VEGETABLES WE WOULD BE FACED WITH NEW ISSUE OF WHETHER SAFAIR FLIGHTS CONTRAVENE 1944 CHICAGO CONVENTION. REID SAID FCO LEGAL DEPARTMENT WOULD REVIEW CASE IN LIGHT OF OUR CONTENTION THAT COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT CONTRACTED BY MILITARY ARE STILL COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT. REID AND FORD WERE BOTH INTERESTED AND PUZZLED THAT SAFAIR HAD NOT TRANSITED ASCENSION THIS SPRING WHEN UK HAD GRANTED BLANKET CLEAR-CONFIDENTIAL

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ANCE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: IF DEPARTMENT AGREES IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE AIDE-MEMOIRE SETTING OUT US INTERPRETATION OF ARTICLES IV AND XI AND SUGGESTED PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING THIRD-PARTY ASCENSION CLEARANCE REQUESTS, PLEASE PROVIDE LANGUAGE.

RICHARDSON

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